

GAZETTE EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • FEBRUARY 2011

BLIZZARD BURIES HIGHLAND

The February snowstorm that pelted the region nearly lived up to its pre-storm hype — about 20 inches of fluffy white fell within 24 hours.

Town Council President Brian Novak said police, fire and public works were able to respond to all emergencies throughout the storm.

“We had a garage fire Tuesday night and some access issues for ambulance calls where the Fire Department was able to help,” Novak said. “Our departments did a fantastic job as did Prompt Ambulance.”

Heavy snow warnings were the kind of forecasts that used to put Public Works Director John Bach on edge. He said after 30 years of working with the ravages of Mother Nature, he is able to take it more in stride.

“Our snow crews worked 12-hour shifts around the clock until the job was done,” he said. “All department heads met every four hours to discuss what was working and where we needed to make adjustments.”

It was the same story at Prompt’s Highland headquarters.

“Whenever we know we have this kind of storm coming, we double our staffing and increase the number of dispatchers we have working,” said Joe Merry, director of operations for Prompt. “We monitor the weather constantly to determine what is safe and what isn’t. It’s an evolving process.”



DIGGING OUT: The town’s full fleet of snow trucks make the rounds as the blizzard slams Highland, dumping more than 2 inches of fresh powder every hour. Residents are reminded that special parking rules are in effect during a snow event. Residents on marked snow routes must move their vehicles from the street within 8 hours of the start of a snowfall of one inch or more. All other streets have 24 hours. Residents are strongly urged to move vehicles from the streets in order to allow greater effectiveness in the snow clearing and plowing operations. Photo provided by John Bach

COUNCILMAN SHARES WHITE-KNUCKLE RIDE

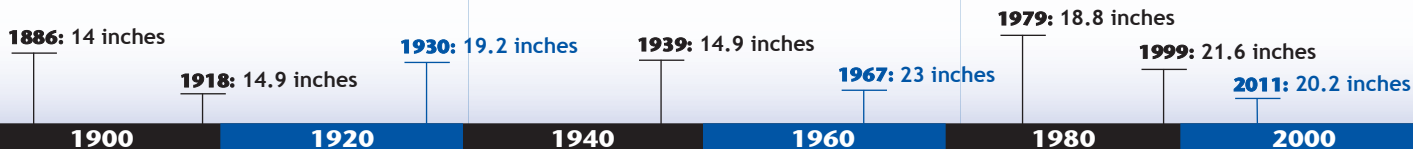
When Councilman Konnie Kuiper wanted to know what it was like to run a heavy plow in the height of a snowstorm, he went to the source.

Before the February snows blanketed the region, Kuiper was a ride-along during a day shift with Kevin Huzzie, who has become one of the experts in town snow removal on a large scale.

“These are huge trucks and the guys who drive them are expert operators who have to work in some very tight spaces,” Kuiper said. “They take their jobs very seriously and do them extremely well. I was completely impressed with the work they do.”

“I don’t think I could do that. I was gripping the hand rest so tightly when we were bouncing over bumps and potholes, I’m sure I left a mark.”

THIRD LARGEST SNOWFALL IN HISTORY



NOVAK ELECTED PRESIDENT

Councilman Brian Novak will lead the Town Council in 2011 as its president. Novak was elected chief executive of the town by his fellow councilman in January. He replaces Councilman Mark Herak. Councilman Konnie Kuiper was elected vice president.

NEW MEETING TIMES

The Town Council has changed its meeting schedule. The council will now hold its business meetings on the second and fourth Mondays and study sessions on the first and third Mondays of each month. All meetings are open to the public and begin at 7 p.m. at Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road.

YOUR COUNCILMEN



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:



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POLICING EFFORTS PAY OFF AS CRIME CONTINUES TO DECLINE

Criminal activity in town continued its downward trend in 2010 and Police Chief Pete Hohnicki couldn't be happier.

Overall, Highland's violent crime decreased 29 percent while non-violent crime decreased by 14 percent during 2010. Highland's numbers compare favorably with those of the rest of the country, which reported a 6.1 percent decrease in violent crime and a 2.8 percent reduction in non-violent crime for the first half of 2010.

Town Council President Brian Novak was thrilled with the latest numbers.

"This just goes to show that the hard work the police are doing on the streets is paying off," Novak said. "This is the kind of initiative that may begin with the chief but it doesn't end there. We have a department of dedicated police officers who work together as a team.

"We also need to thank our hard-working Volunteers in Police Services members, who work with the department and are helping to make an impact," he said. "This is great news for our residents and for those who would like to locate in a community, like Highland, which is such a great place to raise a family. It is also a warning to the criminal element that we don't tolerate crime in Highland."

Hohnicki credited the decreases to members of his department and the investments that have been made in policing.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY AT-A-GLANCE

Highland police report declines in nearly every category of criminal activity and no murders throughout 2010. Overall, violent crime decreased 29 percent while non-violent crime decreased 14 percent.



	2009	2010
Robberies	17	6
Rapes	3	1
Assaults	125	96
Burglaries	101	81
Vandalism	480	373
Larceny	736	683
Arson	4	1
Vehicle thefts	55	57

SOURCE: 2010 HIGHLAND POLICE REPORTS

He said VIPS officers, a thriving Crime Watch Program, the anonymous TIPS hotline (838-tips) and the take-home squad car program, which quadruples the presence of marked squad cars on the streets, have also boosted crime-fighting efforts throughout town. 🐾

NEW FOUNDATION SEEKS RESIDENTS' INPUT

The newly formed Highland Community Foundation is looking for your input. Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro, who is also a member of the foundation board, said the group is looking for input into the projects that would make Highland an even better place to live, work and play.

"We are looking for the kinds of projects the town government, businesses and residents can't do on their own," Petro said.

"We want to raise money for the kind of projects tax dollars can't do and we have some ideas about what the foundation might be able to do to help the town but, before we do anything we want to hear from the residents."

Petro said the group is looking for ways to raise funds for projects in the near term and at sustainable sources of revenue to establish an endowment for the future.

"We are very fortunate that we are able to do this without any administrative costs at this point," she said.

"All dollars that are raised will be used to finance projects and the long term growth of the foundation." 🐾

INFO: If you would like to learn more about the foundation or offer a suggestion about projects you would like to see happen in Highland, please email the foundation at Leadership46322@yahoo.com or call Cecil Petro at the Town Hall (219) 838-1080.

HIGHLAND SANITARY DISTRICT

2011 PROJECTS TO PROTECT HOMES FROM SEWER BACKUPS

After a banner year in 2010, Sanitary District Board President Rex Burton is looking forward to a repeat.

"Thanks to President Obama's 'Build America Bonds,' the town was able to take on \$7 million of major projects and save 25 percent in the process," he said. "The slow economy made construction companies sharpen their pencils and we got excellent pricing. We also saved \$150,000 in interest expense by staggering bond issues. We secured more bids from financial institutions because these were not municipal bonds."

This year, the Sanitary Board will continue its focus on projects that will protect households from sanitary sewer backups. The goal will be to investigate the sources of storm water infiltrating the sanitary system and eliminate them.

Town Council President Brian Novak, praised the work of the Commissioners.

"The Town Council gave this board a job to eliminate residential flooding and as many resources as we could muster," Novak said. "They have been diligent about this responsibility and have worked tirelessly to make us all safer from a problem we never see – unless it's raining."


The punch list for 2011 includes:

- Rebuilding Parrish Avenue with sewer improvements from Ridge Road south to Lincoln Street. **Cost: \$235,000**
- Separating sewers for 145 homes on Garfield Street from Kennedy Avenue east to Liable Road. **Cost: \$1.3 million**
- Improving drainage at Sheppard Park/Southridge School. **Cost: \$600,000**
- Completing the installation of the town's new SCADA electronic system that monitors in real-time what is actually happening underground during storms.
- Improving drainage, including installation of catch basins, patching

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

When Munster's camera truck broke down late last year, Highland offered to step in and help televise an underground sewer. It's the kind of thing, Public Works Director John Bach said has become the norm for the communities along the Ridge. "It's about being a good neighbor," Bach said. "When we needed some help mowing, Griffith stepped in and mowed for us. It's nice to be able to help each other."

defective sanitary lines and other minor repairs to the underground infrastructure. **Cost: \$300,000**

- Relining failing sewers using no-dig trenchless technology. **Cost: \$300,000**
- Replacing failing sewer along 42nd Street to Grace Street. **Cost: \$595,000**
- Initiating grants to residents to eliminate inflow and infiltration. **Cost: \$250,000**
- Beginning Phase 1A of the Indianapolis Boulevard Reconstruction Project, which removes the overpass near the Ultra shopping complex. A new bike path tunnel will give residents easy access to Wicker Park from the north end of town. **Cost: Funded by the INDOT.**
- Making improvements to the Rookery outlet waterway that empties into the Little Calumet River at Cline Avenue.
- Finishing the new 37th Street Pump Station Backup Generator project.
- Installing two backup generators in Industrial park to power the two pump stations. This will ensure every pump station in town has a backup generator.
- Fine-tuning sanitary flows leaving Lakeside subdivision.
- Initiating a pilot lateral replacement program in Lakeside to address failing residential laterals that are dumping large amounts of storm water into the public sanitary sewers. 

LITTLE CAL LEVEE PROPOSAL

A legislative proposal would provide for the upkeep of the Little Calumet River levee by imposing an annual fee on most Lake County homeowners and businesses.

Homeowners would pay \$25 per parcel, farmers would pay \$50 per acreage tract, commercial property owners would pay \$100 and industrial property owners would pay \$200.

If passed, as much as \$10 million per year could be raised, ample funding to maintain the levee and protect nearby homes and businesses from flooding.

OUT-OF-STATE AUTO PLATES

Highland Police are stepping up enforcement to identify residents in violation of Indiana's reciprocity laws.

Police have tagged 110 vehicles with out-of-state license plates and another 25 citations for non-compliance. After being tagged, residents have 60 days to properly register their vehicles.

Police Chief Pete Hornick said officers will be canvassing apartments and other areas with multifamily housing to issue additional warnings to noncompliant vehicle owners.

INFO: Report suspected violations at wraw.Highlandville.com.

NEW BOARD APPOINTMENTS

FOUR-YEAR APPOINTMENTS:

- Mario Martini, Plan Commission
- Steven Wagner, Board of Zoning Appeals
- Rex Burton, Sanitary Board

THREE-YEAR APPOINTMENTS:

- Keith Bruxvoort, Water Board
- George Georgeff, Water Board

YEAR-LONG APPOINTMENTS:

- Tom Crowl, Redevelopment Commission
- Bridget DeYoung, Redevelopment
- Michael Maloney, Redevelopment

LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS:

- Carlos Aburto, Park Board, 4 years
- James Turoci, Police Commission, 3 years
- Dominic Noce, Redevelopment, 1 year
- Greg Kuzmar, Redevelopment, 1 year

CALLING ALL CRAFTERS!

There's still time to get in on the Highland Band Spring Craft Fair, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 12 and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 13 at Highland Middle School. Interested crafters should email Frank Postulka at postulka@att.net

BIDDY BOWLING

Escape the snow and head over to Plaza Lanes for a day of family fun! Biddy Bowling with the Highland Parks and Recreation Department is open to children ages 4 to 11.

WHEN: 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 5 to March 5.

WHERE: Plaza Lanes, 8101 Kennedy Ave. in Highland

FEE: \$35 per child for residents, \$38 for nonresidents.

INFO: Visit wraw.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114



MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Highland youth or students attending Highland Middle Schools are invited to participate in the Parks & Recreation's Middle School Basketball League. The league format will be determined by registration numbers. Everyone receives a T-shirt. The first-place team receives winner T-shirts. Teams will be determined by player draft with the coaches.

WHEN: 5 to 10 p.m. Tuesdays, March 15 - May 24

PRACTICE BEGINS: First week of March

WHERE: Lincoln Center

FEE: \$43 per person

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Feb. 13

WHERE: Lincoln Center

INFO: Visit wraw.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Highland teens or students attending Highland High School are invited to participate in the Parks & Recreation's High School Basketball League. The league format will be determined by registration numbers. Teams must wear shirts with numbers. The first-place team will receive winners T-shirts. Participants must sign up as a team. No individual registration.

WHEN: 5 to 10 p.m. Tuesdays, March 8 - May 24

MANAGER MEETING: 7 p.m. Feb. 24

WHERE: Lincoln Center

FEE: \$325 per team

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Feb. 20

WHERE: Lincoln Center

INFO: Visit wraw.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

DADDY-DAUGHTER DANCE

Highland dads and their daughters are invited to enjoy dancing, raffle, refreshments and music by Sensational Sounds at the annual Daddy-Daughter Dance. Fox Photography will provide one free photo. Extras will be available for purchase.

WHEN: 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11

WHERE: Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

AGES: 5 to 13

FEE: \$15 couple, \$7.50 additional daughter; \$20 couple, \$8 additional daughter if paid the week of the dance.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Feb. 10 or when 500 couple capacity is met. No tickets sold the day of the dance.

INFO: Visit wraw.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

COLORED-PENCIL ART CLASS

This course is designed for beginners and advanced students. Instructor Fred Holly will teach colored pencil techniques, such as cross hatching, blending and burnishing on a variety of surfaces. Using Prismacolor pencils, students will explore the diversity of this medium and create interesting one-of-a-kind compositions.

WHEN: 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. or 7 to 9 p.m. Mondays, Feb. 14 through April 4.

WHERE: Lincoln Center

AGES: Adult

FEE: \$39 residents, \$42 non-residents

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Feb. 7

WHERE: Supplies not included.

INFO: Visit wraw.highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

HIGHLAND LITTLE LEAGUE

Boys and girls can register now for the following divisions: T-Ball, Rookie, Minor B, Minor A and Majors.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 12 and 19.

WHERE: Lincoln Center

NOTE: Players must reside in Highland and turn 4 by April 30, 2011 to be eligible to play. Birth certificate and proof of residency required.

INFO: Call Highland Little League President Dan Vassar at (219) 924-1945.

HIGHLAND YOUTH SOFTBALL

Spring and summer sports seasons are just a few short months away and sign-ups are already scheduled.

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 12, 19 and 26; 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, March 2

WHERE: Lincoln Center

INFO: Visit wraw.highlandyouthsoftball.com, email secretary@highlandyouthsoftball.com or call Highland Youth Softball Secretary Rebekah Thompson at (219) 902-6010.